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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE
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REGULATIONS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Energy & Technology Public Hearing Testimony
February 17, 2011

**H.B. No. 6017 AN ACT CONCERNING DEPOSITS AND RECONNECTION FEES
CHARGED BY UTILITY COMPANIES.**

Good afternoon Chairman Fonfara, Chairwoman Nardello, Vice-Chairs, ranking members and the members of the Energy and Technology Committee. I am here to testify on behalf of HB 6017 *An Act Concerning Deposits and Reconnection Fees charged by Utility Companies*.

I would like to share an experience that one of my constituents had with her utility company. This individual had fallen upon rough times and was unable to pay her gas bill on time. Unfortunately, two months went by and she was still not able to pay. She received a shut off notice but didn't answer it because she was out of town at the time. When she got back to her home, the gas was shut off.

My constituent was able to finally get the money to get it turned back on by paying what she owed. She paid the overdue portion of the bill, all the interest and finance charges, late fees and reconnection fee as well. To her surprise she was also asked to put a deposit so she could get the gas turned back on. My constituent understands that it was her obligation to keep up with her bills and to pay the interest charges and finance charges which applied, but she was shocked to find out she had to agree to pay a deposit to get her utilities put back on.

When I heard the story my constituent was telling me, I could not believe that a utility company would charge a deposit to a long time customer who had a good record of paying her bills. I agree that in this situation all charges should be paid, and of course, the finance charges and whatever re-connect fee exist, but charging a deposit on top of all the charges is going too far.

I ask this committee to take a look at this practice and try to make the necessary changes so that our constituents are not forced to pay deposits on accounts which have had been placed on shut off notice, especially during the winter months.

Testimony Submitted by,
Andres Ayala, Jr.